



## LISTENING TO THE PACIFIC

### FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM REGIONAL INITIATIVE SUBMISSION TEMPLATE 2016

#### **The Framework for Pacific Regionalism**

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism represents a high-level commitment to pursuing deeper regionalism and establishes a process for developing and prioritising regional public policy. It articulates the vision, values and objectives of an enhanced Pacific regionalism. It also sets out an inclusive process by which anyone can propose ideas for regional initiatives to address key challenges facing the Pacific. For more information, [click here](#).

#### **Regional Issues and Guidance**

When preparing your submission, think carefully about why this is an issue of regional significance and why it should be placed before the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum. For further information on the process and types of submissions being sought, please refer to the guideline below.

#### **To Submit a Regional Initiative**

1. Complete the below regional initiative template below.
2. Submit initiative to the Forum Secretariat by deadline: **5pm, Fiji time, Sunday 10 April 2016.**
3. Initiatives should be submitted to the Forum Secretariat, through one of the following ways:



## **FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM – REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE**

*Please complete each section below.*

### **1. Contact Details**

*Please provide the following contact details:*

**Name of individual or group submitting initiative**

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law & Development (APWLD) and the Fiji Women's Forum (FWF).

**Name and position of primary contact**

**Diyana Yahaya, Programme Officer of APWLD and Losana Tuiraviravi, Coordinator of FWF**

**Email address**

**Phone number**

**Fax number**

**Mailing address**

### **2. Name of Initiative**

Pacific Islands Women Caucus



**3. What is the common regional issue or challenge that this regional initiative aims to address?**

*You may also want to address the following: What are the causes of this issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?*

***Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.***

In September last year, governments from all over the world adopted a new set of Sustainable Development Goals also known as Agenda 2030. These goals were adopted at a moment when the dual threats of catastrophic climate change and growing, obscene levels of inequality compel us to interrogate the very foundations of global economic and political systems. Inequality continues to grow so high that almost half of the world's wealth is now owned by just 1 percent of the population, amounting to \$110 trillion—65 times the total wealth of the bottom half of the world's population. The richest 85 individuals in the world hold a staggering 125 times more wealth than the combined GDP of 10 Pacific Island countries. While typhoons, flash floods, landslides, drought, rising sea levels, unpredictable water access and weather patterns, crop loss and large scale displacements has become a devastating reality for women in the Pacific Islands.

At the same time Pacific Islands are being encouraged to welcome and expand neo-liberal economies. This economic model assumes that “development” and growth are synonymous – the more profit extracted from labour, the more resources extracted from earth, the more people consumed, the more developed, it is assumed, a country will become. The present development and economic model promoted in the Pacific liberalizes investment markets, promotes foreign direct investment, reduces tariffs and, consequently, reduces public funds and expenditure. A study commission by the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat in 2007 found that Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Vanuatu each stand to lose upwards of \$10 million annually in tariff revenues currently collected on imports from Australia and New Zealand as a result of PACER plus. While both men and women are affected by the growth development model and climate change, their experiences are different because of differing gender roles and inequality.

Patriarchal structures have historically excluded women from education, information, political spaces, resources and opportunities and legal rights. Globally, women and children are more likely to live in poverty than men though little research has been done towards the collection of this data in the Pacific. The level of violence against women in the Pacific is among the worst in the world. Climate disasters leaves women most vulnerable in its aftermath while simultaneously excluding women from the decisions-making process that impacts them. The percentage of women in Pacific parliaments currently hovers at around 6.1%. Significant advances has been achieved in the Pacific, the number of women in Pacific islands parliament continues to show an upward trend, and the Pacific Island Forum can proudly say the name of its First Female Secretary General, women continue to experience violence, face tremendous challenges in participating in decision-making structures and occupying leadership positions.

Agenda 2030 seeks to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environment. The continued exclusion of women from decision-making prevents effective, gender sensitive policymaking and stops women from contributing their skills, knowledge and experiences, which could benefit their entire community and country. For women in the Pacific, the interlocking of patriarchal practices, coupled with economic injustice and the increase and particular vulnerabilities of women to the degradation of natural resources and during natural disasters fuels existing inequalities and chronic marginalization and will ultimately prevent the achievement of sustainable development of the region.

Women need a new model of development that is equitable, sustainable and just. The Pacific Islands with its common sense of identity, purpose and challenges, is uniquely placed to advance a model of regionalism that is united, collaborative, democratic, accountable and transformative in advancing women's rights and development justice nationally, regionally and internationally. Women can champion a framework of development that is based on human rights and goes beyond economic integration for multi-national corporations. A model that ensures women's participation and leadership at all levels. It is only through women playing a role in redefining the development framework that women will be able to fully enjoy their human rights, gender equality and development justice.



#### 4. Briefly describe this regional initiative

*You may also want to address the following in this section:*

*How would this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region?*

*Who are the main beneficiaries?*

*How would the initiative contribute to the vision, values and objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism?*

*Has the initiative been carried out previously?*

*What are the key risks in implementing this initiative?*

*Are there any complementary projects and programmes that are currently active?*

***Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.***

Pacific Islands women are not *only* victims of violence, discrimination, or climate change. They are agents of change and social transformation. Studies have shown that the establishment of women's parliamentary caucuses is one of the mechanisms that have enabled women in parliament to strengthen their political impact. A global study has also found that a strong, autonomous and empowered women's movement is imperative in combating violence against women. It is therefore important to strengthen the cooperation of women engaged in political life and women's rights organizations and activists. A common caucus firstly, unites women parliamentarians from different political parties around issues they all can support, helping them rise above the tensions between parties to fight for women's causes or collaborate on other policy issue. Secondly, a common caucus also unites women's organizations and activists with women parliamentarians in educating, advocating and lobbying through a social movement grounded at the various levels by women who are experts in their own experiences. Through constant exchange and sharing of concepts, realities, experiences and strategies, Pacific islands women's voices, rights, participation and representation are integrated in all Pacific local, national and regional processes, decisions, instruments, policies, mechanism and structures. It is therefore important that the strength and capacities of the Pacific islands women's movements and women leaders working for the enhancement of women's participation in politics and governance and the advancement of women's rights, be harnessed and consolidated.

The Pacific Islands Women Caucus is a network of women parliamentarians and women's rights organisations and women's rights activists engaging with each other, to increase the voice and influence of Pacific women in democratic processes and decision making and to advance women's rights and development justice in the Pacific Islands and territories. It aims to ensure that members of the Caucus are able to harness solidarity and togetherness across parties, across decision-making levels, not only across Pacific islands but also within a country, through the principles of power sharing and solidarity. The objective of the Pacific Islands Women Caucus is to support women parliamentarian and women's rights organizations and activists in the Pacific Islands to advance participatory democratic rights of women affected by discrimination, inequalities and climate change and ultimately to change systems and structures responsible for marginalisation.

The Pacific Islands with a common sense of identity, purpose and challenges, is uniquely placed to advance a model of regionalism that is united, collaborative, democratic, accountable and transformative in advancing women's rights and development justice nationally, regionally and internationally. Pacific women can champion a framework of regionalism that is based on human rights and goes beyond economic integration for multi-national corporations. A model that ensures women's participation and leadership at all levels. It is only through redefining the development framework that women will be able to fully enjoy their human rights, gender equality and development justice. The Pacific Framework for Regionalism calls upon strengthening of cooperation and collaboration among Pacific Islands. The Framework also embraces genuine democracy, gender equality and sustainable. Sustainable development and genuine democracy requires women's participation and leadership in decision-making at all levels, starting at home and extending to the highest levels of government.

The Caucus can collaborate and complement the existing Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships initiative and the existing



network of women's rights, activists organizations already working in the region by bringing together these 2 different stakeholders to work together. It can also complement the various initiatives already carried out by the PIF Secretariat and various UN agencies to advance gender equality and women's rights in the region. Though this caucus is in favour of women, it will nonetheless benefit male members of the community through their wives and women counterparts – as an equal and just society benefits everyone.

##### **5. Why does this initiative require the attention of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum?**

*Please consider whether this initiative requires the attention and consideration of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in order to be implemented and outline why this is the case. Could it not be overseen or implemented at the level of Ministers, officials or by a regional agency?*

*Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.*

The Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum has made numerous commitments towards gender equality, women's rights, democratic governance and addressing climate change in the Pacific Islands through the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration and subsequently the commitments made under the Sustainable Development Goals/Agenda 2030. At the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review in 2014, the Pacific Island nations brought the progressive voices that promoted women's rights and gender equality and regional civil societies engagement mechanism in the negotiation. Fragile Pacific Islands that are least responsible for the climate change, but are the most adversely affected, are already leading the charge in implementing the landmark Paris climate deal from last year. The threat of persistently pervasive patriarchal structure and inequalities, and climate change has been very much recognized by Pacific Islands' leaders.

Through the Caucus, there is an opportunity to involve women in politics, women's rights activists and women's organizations to monitor, support and sustain the implementations of the commitments already made by Pacific Islands' leaders at the highest level under Agenda 2030, Beijing+20 and COP 21. This is especially important as there can only be full implementation when there is a full, fair, inclusive and genuine participation from society at large. It can provide a regional engagement mechanism that provides a platform for diverse and multi-stakeholders working to advance women's rights and gender equality.

There are already various Pacific Islands civil societies organizations who have been cooperating together in on Agenda 2030, along with issues of women's rights, gender equality and climate change. By the will allow for more systematic engagement for women parliamentarians and women's rights organizations and activists, and a better and more effective way of engaging 'upwards' with governments, regional and international organizations as well as 'downwards' with national and subnational civil society and grassroots communities and movements. The Caucus can provide a regular and mutual space so that its members can interact and communicate on a regular basis, as opposed to a one off or one time engagement. It will do so through facilitating a democratic, mutual learning and exchange space as part of a bigger, overarching struggle for social transformation.



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## **6. Attachments**

Please attach additional information in support of this initiative.

*Please attach no more than 3 pages.*

## **7. Uploading initiatives to the Forum Secretariat website**

In line with the process outlined in the [Framework for Pacific Regionalism](#), all submitted initiatives, inclusive of all attachments, will be publicly available via the Forum Secretariat website.

## **8. Guidelines and Contact Details**

For further information on completing this template, consult the submissions guideline below or contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat:



## Submission Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to assist those submitting regional initiatives through the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. For more information contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat:

Email: [FPR@forumsec.org](mailto:FPR@forumsec.org) | Phone: +679 322 0327

### 1. About the Framework for Pacific Regionalism

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism represents a high-level commitment to pursuing deeper regionalism and establishes a process for developing and prioritising regional public policy. It articulates the vision, values and objectives of an enhanced Pacific regionalism. It also sets out an inclusive process by which anyone can propose ideas for regional initiatives to address key challenges facing the Pacific. For more information, [click here](#).

### 2. How do I submit a regional initiative?

To submit a regional initiative, complete all sections of the submission template and submit to the Forum Secretariat by no later **5pm, Fiji time, Sunday 10 April 2016**.

Submissions must be made on this template. Submissions made directly via email, letter or other format will not be considered.



### 3. Who can submit an initiative?

Any interested stakeholder can submit a regional initiative. This may include individuals, or groups of individuals or organisations, including government, civil society (including church or religious organisations), the private sector, community groups, multilateral agencies and CROP agencies.

### 4. What information is required?

In completing the regional initiative template, you should:

- a. Identify and seek to respond to issues and challenges that are common to the Pacific region and that could be best addressed through a regional response.
- b. Demonstrate that a high level political decision needs to be made.

**This is not a process for seeking endorsement of existing projects or activities. No standing fund exists in which to allocate funds to initiatives that are endorsed.** Submissions that consist of projects or initiatives that may be ordinarily carried out under the governance arrangements or work-plan of the submitting organisation are unlikely to be successful.

- c. Demonstrate how the initiative would contribute to one or more of the objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

### 5. What assistance will the Forum Secretariat provide through this process

The Forum Secretariat will provide general advice and suggestions to those making submissions. This advice will include clarifying the information set out in this guideline, such as how initiatives can be completed and submitted; the type and level of information sought; the assessment process; and clarification of the overall process.

### 6. Assessment process

- Step 1** The Forum Secretariat will collate all submitted initiatives and check them for completeness.
- Step 2** The Forum Secretariat will, in collaboration with CROP agency officials and other experts as required, conduct a first round of assessment of all submitted initiatives using the tests for regional action (see Table 1 below).
- Step 3** The Forum Secretariat will provide all assessed initiatives to the Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism (SSCR), which will assess initiatives against the vision, values and objectives set out in the Framework (see Table 2 below). Reports on current regional initiatives under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism that are in progress will also be considered by the SSCR when they assess initiatives.
- Step 4** Based on its assessment of all submissions, the SSCR may recommend a limited number of initiatives to Forum Leaders. Those initiatives recommended to Leaders will be first sent to the Forum Officials Committee for commentary and incorporation on the Leaders' annual meeting agenda. Forum Leaders



will then receive the final recommendations of the SSCR and make decisions on these at the annual Forum Leaders Meeting. In 2016 this meeting will take place in the Federated States of Micronesia

Proponents whose initiatives have been selected for Leaders' consideration will be informed of this selection within two weeks of the SSCR's decision. All proponents will be informed in due course of the outcome of their submissions.

#### **7. Leaders' decisions on initiatives**

Forum Leaders' decisions on initiatives will be publicly announced through the Forum Leaders' Communique that is issued at the conclusion of the Leaders' meeting. As directed by Leaders, the Forum Secretariat will initiate implementation of the decisions in consultation with the proponent, the proposed implementing agencies, funding partners, and other relevant organisations or stakeholders.

#### **8. Further help and feedback**

For further information or guidance or to provide feedback on the process, contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat: Email: [FPR@forumsec.org](mailto:FPR@forumsec.org) | Phone: +679 322 0327



**Table 1 – Tests for Regionalism**

<b>TEST</b>	<b>CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION</b>
<b>Market test</b>	The initiative should not involve a service that markets can provide well.
<b>Sovereignty test</b>	The initiative should maintain the degree of effective sovereignty held by national governments (countries, not regional bodies, should decide priorities).
<b>Regionalism test</b>	<p>The initiative should meet one of the following criteria at a sub-regional or regional level, in support of national priorities and objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ establish a shared norm or standard</li><li>▪ establish a common position on an issue</li><li>▪ deliver a public or quasi-public good which is regional (or sub-regional) in its scope realise economies of scale</li><li>▪ overcome national capacity constraints</li><li>▪ complement national governments where they lack capacity to provide national public goods like security or the rule of law</li><li>▪ facilitate economic or political integration</li><li>▪ Where benefits accrue sub-regionally, the contribution to broader regionalism should be clear.</li></ul>
<b>Benefit test</b>	<p>The initiative should bring substantial net benefits, as demonstrated by a cost-benefit analysis. The distribution of benefits across countries and across stakeholders within the region should also be considered—particularly with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The relative costs and benefits for smaller island states (an “SIS test”)</li><li>▪ How inclusive the proposal is of all stakeholders who might benefit from regionalism.</li></ul>
<b>Political oversight test</b>	The initiative should require the Leaders’ attention and input (as opposed to being within the mandate of Ministers or other governing bodies).
<b>Risk and sustainability test</b>	The initiative should demonstrate a robust risk and sustainability evaluation, be based on a sound implementation plan, be supported by some identified funding, and demonstrate available capacity and experience for successful implementation.
<b>Duplication test</b>	The initiative should not be currently under progress by another organisation or process, and there should be no duplication of effort.



## **Table 2 – Vision, Values and Objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism**

### **Vision:**

Our Pacific Vision is for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives

### **Values:**

- We value and depend upon the integrity of our vast ocean and our island resources.
- We treasure the diversity and heritage of the Pacific and seek an inclusive future in which cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are valued, honoured and developed.
- We embrace good governance, the full observance of democratic values, the rule of law, the defence and promotion of all human rights, gender equality, and commitment to just societies.
- We seek peaceful, safe, and stable communities and countries, ensuring full security and wellbeing for the peoples of the Pacific.
- We support full inclusivity, equity and equality for all people of the Pacific.
- We strive for effective, open and honest relationships and inclusive and enduring partnerships—based on mutual accountability and respect—with each other, within our sub-regions, within our region, and beyond.

These Pacific regional values will guide all our policy-making and implementation.

### **Principal Objectives:**

- Sustainable development that combines economic social, and cultural development in ways that improve livelihoods and well-being and use the environment sustainably;
- Economic growth that is inclusive and equitable;
- Strengthened governance, legal, financial, and administrative systems; and
- Security that ensures stable and safe human, environmental and political conditions for all.